

Slaughter Hosts Meeting with EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson on Great Lakes Future

Urges Agency to Support GLRC Final Report, Due for Release December 12th

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-Fairport), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, yesterday hosted a meeting with EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson to urge his support of the final report due to be issued by the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC) on December 12th.

"The final report issued by the GLRC needs to be taken seriously by the EPA if we hope to meet the challenges facing the Great Lakes region and the tens of millions of citizens who live there," Rep. Slaughter said. **"I am proud to be part of a bi-partisan group of Members representing the districts of this national treasure who will continue to fight for it to get the attention it deserves,"** she added.

The GLRC report, which contains plans and recommendations for restoring the Great Lakes region, has yet to receive the endorsement of President Bush, who has backed away from issuing any concrete federal funding numbers for future work on the Lakes. At the meeting, Rep. Slaughter also advocated for an increase in Great Lakes funding in the 2007 budget.

Representatives Vernon J. Ehlers (R-MI-3), Mark Steven Kirk (R-IL-10), Rahm Emanuel (D-IL-5), Dale E. Kildee (D-MI-5), Bart Stupak (D-MI-1), and Sander M. Levin (D-MI-12) were also present at the event.

BACKGROUND

President Bush issued **Executive Order 13340 in May, 2004**. The E.O. did two things:

- It established a federal interagency task force to streamline Great Lakes programs and make them more efficient.

- It directed the EPA to create the **Great Lakes Regional Collaboration** of National Significance (GLRC). The GLRC is a collaborative partnership of key members from federal, state, and local governments, tribes, and other stakeholders for the purpose of developing a strategic plan. This strategy is intended to build upon the extensive regional efforts to date, working together toward common goals of restoring the Great Lakes.

Current Developments

GLRC is nearing the completion of their final report, due to the President by December 12. The original goal was for the Bush Administration to endorse the final report and commit to increased funding for the Great Lakes. However, last month, word leaked out that the White House is going to consider the final report as an "advisory" and, due to budget constraints, will not commit to new funding.

Failure to obtain Administration support for the GLRC final report would greatly reduce the value of the Collaboration effort and diminish the significance of its hard and commendable work.